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The rule of law at the national and international levels

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Seventy-first year

Letter dated 8 July 2016 from the representatives of China and the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Declaration of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on the Promotion of International Law (see annex), signed in Beijing on 25 June 2016 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, Wang Yi.

We should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 85, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Vitaly Churkin
Permanent Representative
of the Russian Federation

(*Signed*) Wu Haitao
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Deputy Permanent Representative
of the People's Republic of China

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Annex to the letter dated 8 July 2016 from the representatives of China and the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Original: Chinese, English and Russian

The Declaration of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on the Promotion of International Law

1. The Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China reiterate their full commitment to the principles of international law as they are reflected in the Charter of the United Nations, the 1970 Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations. They are also guided by the principles enshrined in the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. The principles of international law are the cornerstone for just and equitable international relations featuring win-win cooperation, creating a community of shared future for mankind, and establishing common space of equal and indivisible security and economic cooperation.

2. The Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China share the view that the principle of sovereign equality is crucial for the stability of international relations. States enjoy their rights on the basis of independence and on an equal footing, and assume their obligations and responsibilities on the basis of mutual respect. States have the right to participate in the making, interpreting and applying of international law on an equal footing, and have the obligation to comply with international law in good faith and in a coherent and consistent manner.

3. The Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China reaffirm the principle that States shall refrain from the threat or use of force in violation of the Charter of the United Nations and therefore condemn unilateral military interventions.

4. The Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China fully support the principle of non-intervention in the internal or external affairs of States, and condemn as a violation of this principle any interference by States in the internal affairs of other States with the aim of forging change of legitimate governments. The Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China condemn extraterritorial application of national law by States not in conformity with international law as another example of violation of the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States.

5. The Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China reaffirm the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes and express their firm conviction that States shall resolve their disputes through dispute settlement means and mechanisms that they have agreed upon, and all means of settlement of disputes should serve the goal of resolving disputes in a peaceful manner in accordance with applicable international law, thus leading to de-escalation of tensions and promotion of peaceful cooperation among disputing parties. This applies equally to all types and stages of dispute settlement, including political and diplomatic means when they serve a pre-requisite to the use of other mechanisms of dispute settlement. It is crucial for the maintenance of international legal order that all dispute settlement means and mechanisms are based on consent and used in good faith and in the spirit of cooperation, and their purposes shall not be undermined by abusive practices.

6. The Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China share the view that good faith implementation of generally recognized principles and rules of international law excludes the practice of double standards or imposition by some States of their will on other States, and consider that imposition of unilateral coercive measures not based on international law, also known as "unilateral sanctions", is an example of such practice. The adoption of unilateral coercive measures by States in addition to measures adopted by the United Nations Security Council can defeat the objects and purposes of measures imposed by the Security Council, and undermine their integrity and effectiveness.

7. The Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations as a global threat that undermines the international order based on international law. To counter this threat requires collective action in full accordance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations.

8. The Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China assert that international obligations regarding immunity of States, their property and officials must be honoured by States at all times. Violations of these obligations are not in conformity with the principle of sovereign equality of States and may contribute to the escalation of tensions.

9. The Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China emphasize the important role of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in maintaining the rule of law relating to activities in the Oceans. It is of utmost importance that the provisions of this universal treaty are applied consistently, in such a manner that does not impair rights and legitimate interests of States Parties and does not compromise the integrity of the legal regime established by the Convention.

10. In line with their relationship of strategic partnership, the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China are resolved to further enhance their cooperation in upholding and promoting international law and in establishing a just and equitable international order based on international law.

Done at Beijing, on 25th of June, 2016.

On behalf of
the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of the Russian Federation

S.V. Lavrov

On behalf of
the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of the People's Republic of China

Wang Yi